

John Caldwell Calhoun to Andrew Jackson, April 8, 1821, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

SECRETARY CALHOUN TO JACKSON.

War Department, April 8, 1821.

Dear Sir, I have been prevented by a continued pressure of official duties from acknowledging the pleasure, which your favour of the 11th Febury afforded me.

While, I consider an attachment to mere popularity, as an evidence of weakness and vice, I look upon the love of a just renown, as the highest evidence of exalted worth and greatness. The former may be won by intrigue or hypocrisy; the latter only by great and magnanimous actions. The one regards the present; the other looks to futurity. None can doubt, which of these you have persued. Had mere popularity been your object, many of those sacrifices, which now distinguish your life, would have been spared; but then that deep debt, which you will have left on your country and posterity, would not have existed. You may feel the effects of course in a constitution shattered by exertions beyond your physical strength, but the balmy contentment of having faithfully discharged your duty will never forsake you.

Thus regarding your character and actions, I cannot but highly prize the approbation, which you have expressed of my political conduct. I shall carry the remembrance of it, with me through life. Should I meet with the approbation of the wise and good, I ask no more. I think too highly of our country and love it, I hope, too dearly to sport with its destinies. Looking to its future security and greatness, I must often incur the censure of those, whose

Library of Congress

policy revolves round their *own private* interest. I am ready to meet it and shall, I trust, never be driven out of my course by it.¹

¹ Calhoun's flattering language to Jackson reappears about this time in several of his letters. In a letter of Mar. 7, 1821, he wrote: "My course is fixed and nothing will turn me from it. The prosperity of this Republick is too important to make it subordinate to personal aggrandizement, or gratification. As to yourself you are beyond the shaff[t]s of any. Time, which destroys most men's fame will but add to yours. Your country's fame and your's is one; and I would rather have your good opinion with the approbation of my own mind, than all of the popularity, which a pretended love of the people, and a course of popularity hunting, can excite. To love the people is to promote their lasting interest; and not to flatter them; and on this principle posterity will decide."

I am glad you have accepted of the governorship of Florida. It has in fact afforded almost universal satisfaction. The climate, I doubt not, will prove highly genial and may add many years to your valuable life. It will not, however, be necessary for me to say, that you ought to take some precaution in not exposing yourself too freely to its intense summer sun.

Your sentiments in relation to Col Gadsden are those which I feel for him. No one can prize him more highly than myself. His prospect in the army is of the brightest character. The Senate so modified the bill from the house, as to retain the office which he holds;² but had not that been done, I was determined, if possible, to retain his services by finding some place in the army equal to his present grade.

² Inspector general. In August, 1821, the President appointed him adjutant general, but the appointment was not confirmed by the Senate, and expired Mar. 22, 1822.

The subject of the reduction of the army will be under consideration this week. I hope the whole of its talents and experience may be saved. I have no doubt of the disposition of the

Library of Congress

President towards Col Butler, and that an arrangement will be made as to him, which will be satisfactory to his friends.

Believing that you would not be in Nashville at the time, which it would require for the mail to convey this to that place, I have directed to Montpelier,³ where I hope it will meet you in good health. Tho' the official relation, which has existed between us for some time, is about to terminate, yet I shall be very happy to hear from you whenever your convenience may permit. Wishing you long life and every happiness, I remain,

³ Montpelier, Ala., was near Fort Montgomery, *i. e.*, east of the Alabama River and a little above its junction with the Tombigbee.

With sentiment of great respect and esteem